

THE MIDWAY NEWS



MIDWAY BONSAI SOCIETY

MIDWAYBONSAI.CO.ZA

January 2025

www.midwaybonsai.co.za



Inside this issue:

- Chairman's report.
- Club News.
- January's meeting: Ficus
- Editors Letter



Chairmans Report

Hi all,

I hope this letter finds you all well.

We had our first meeting for 2025, on the 18th Jan25, and the topic of the day was Ficus. The display table showed a cross section of the main types used by all, thanks to the displayers. It really is nice to see the work that is going on.

Thanks to Oom Hennie for the mame display, that clearly sparked some people.

Between myself, Pieter and Jonathan the general topic of the ficus was covered, the subject is considerable, and a lively discussion took place, and if one looks at the feedback on the messaging app, it appears that the attendees had a good afternoon.



A special thanks to Desiree for organizing the raffle table, nothing was left over. It is a great way for club members to contribute to table and pass on plants and pots and things that are not being used by you, which someone else can pick up as a cheapie, and de-clutter your storage for more goodies.

Even though we've all had some good rain recently, and we certainly need a lot more, it seems as if the heat is still here, so keep a close eye on your trees, and water if required.

Thanks all and keep those scissors sharp 😊

Mack (John Hecht)



Club news

You're Invited to our next meeting!

Join us on **15 February 2025**, as we gather for a Clump and group planting Workshop and share knowledge.

Here's the agenda:

- 12:00-14:00: Work on your own trees
- 14:00: Talk and workshop on Clump and groups.

Please bring your favourite trees to display on the show table.

Everyone is welcome!

If you have a specific topic, you would like us to cover, please let me know and I'll pass it on.

Looking ahead to our upcoming **workshops**, please note that these are interactive, hands-on events that may require some preparation in advance.

We'll share more details through our Newsletter and WhatsApp group, so stay tuned!



Membership fees

R350.00 for Single

R510.00 for Family

You can pay into the Club
Account, state your name
as reference to:

FNB

Heinrich Crystal

Account No: 63021469689

Branch: 250063



Program for 2025

February 2025:

Groups and clumps Workshop

Following the success of our January Ficus Workshop, we're excited to announce our February event: "The Art of Bonsai: A Clump and groups Workshop". Join us for an engaging, hands-on session where members will share tips and techniques on cultivating and shaping Groups and clumps. This interactive workshop promises to be an enriching experience for all participants.

March 2025:

In March we will have a look at development and wiring on Celtis trees. A lot of members have been asking for this one, so don't miss out.



January's meeting: Ficus

As I sit in my garden, surrounded by the lush greenery of my bonsai collection, my eyes are drawn to my Ficus trees. Native to the tropical regions of Asia and Africa, Ficus species have become a staple in many South African bonsai enthusiasts' collections. In this Newsletter entry, I'd like to explore growing Ficus as bonsai in South Africa.



Climate and Environment

South Africa's climate varies greatly, from the Mediterranean-like conditions of the Western Cape to the subtropical regions of the east coast. Ficus species are adaptable to a wide range of environments, making them an ideal choice for bonsai enthusiasts across the country. However, it's essential to provide your Ficus with protection from extreme temperatures, wind, and frost.



Species Selection

Several Ficus species are well-suited for bonsai cultivation in South Africa. However, two species stand out as the most commonly used: Ficus Natalensis and Ficus Burtt-davyi. Both species are native to South Africa and offer unique characteristics that make them ideal for bonsai.

- **Ficus Natalensis:** A semi-deciduous tree with large, dark green leaves and a broad, spreading canopy. It's a popular choice for bonsai due to its robust root system and ability to tolerate a range of soil conditions.

- **Ficus Burtt-Davii:** A evergreen tree with small, oval-shaped leaves and a compact, rounded canopy. It's a favorite among bonsai enthusiasts due to its ability to tolerate shade and its small leaf size, which makes it ideal for detailed pruning.



Global and Local Availability

Ficus species are widely available globally, with over 800 species found in tropical and subtropical regions. However, the availability of specific species can vary greatly depending on the region. In South Africa, Ficus species are relatively easy to find, particularly in the eastern and coastal regions. However, the availability of specific species can be limited, and prices can vary greatly depending on the nursery, location, and time of year.



Cultivation and Care

Ficus trees require regular watering, but make sure not to overwater, as this can lead to root rot. A well-draining potting mix and a shallow pot will help prevent waterlogged soil. Fertilize your Ficus regularly, using a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer. Pruning is essential to maintain the shape and size of your Ficus bonsai. Prune your tree regularly, removing any dead or damaged branches. Wiring can be used to shape the branches but be cautious not to damage the bark.

Pest and Disease Management

Regularly inspect your Ficus for signs of pests or diseases. Common issues include:

- **Spider mites:** These tiny, sap-sucking insects can cause yellowing leaves and fine webbing.
- **Scale:** These armored insects can cause stunted growth and yellowing leaves.
- **Root rot:** Overwatering can lead to root rot, causing yellowing leaves and a decline in tree health.



Conclusion

Ficus species offer a unique combination of adaptability, beauty, and challenge for South African bonsai enthusiasts. With proper care and attention, your Ficus bonsai can thrive, providing a stunning display of natural artistry. Whether you're a seasoned bonsai expert or just starting out, Ficus is an excellent choice for anyone looking to explore the fascinating world of bonsai.

References- "Ficus: The Complete Guide" by Bonsai Empire- "Growing Ficus as Bonsai" by The Bonsai Channel- "Ficus Species for Bonsai" by Bonsai Study Group



Below: Beautiful red berries on a fire thorn.





Below: I spoke a bit about my Ficus burkei.





Below: A beautiful cascade on the display table.

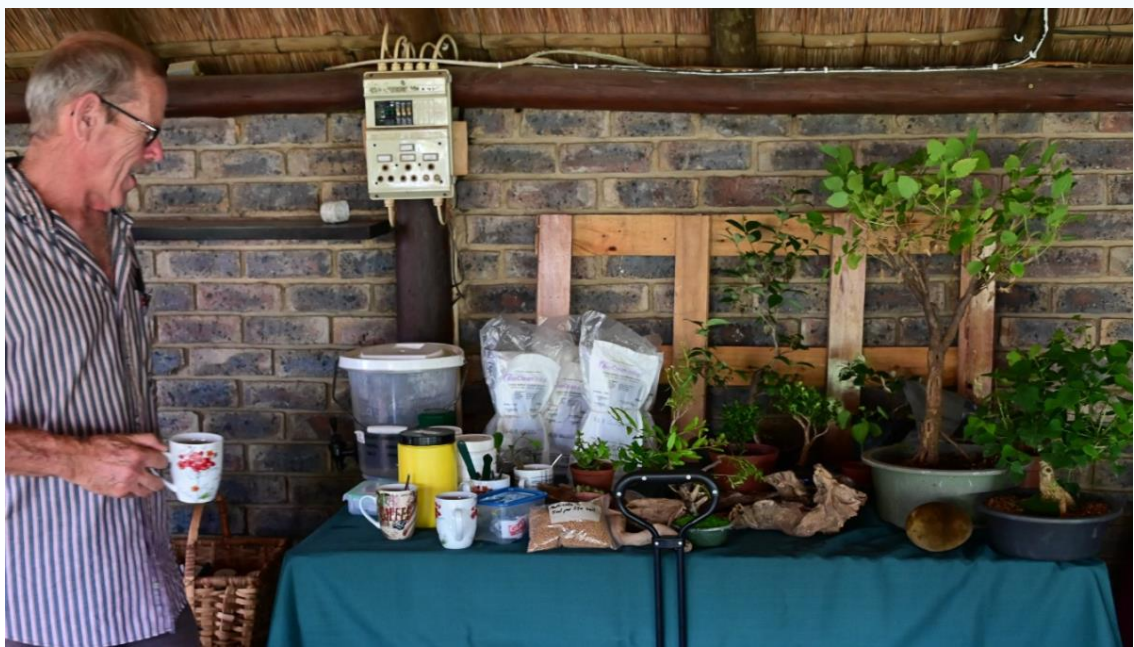


Below: Lovely little mame on the display table.





Below: Our display and coffee table.





Below: From 12h00 to 14h00 during every meeting all members can work on projects and ask for advice from experienced members.



Jonathan Cain at the International Bonsai and Suiseki Confluence

We are delighted to announce that **Jonathan Cain** has been invited to be a demonstrator at the prestigious International Bonsai and Suiseki Confluence!

This esteemed event, hosted by the **Asia Bonsai Federation** (regional organization of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation), will take place in Mumbai from March 21 to 23, 2025.

We are incredibly proud of Jonathan and are confident that he will make Africa proud with his exceptional bonsai skills. Congratulations, Jonathan!



South Asia Bonsai Federation

A Regional Organization of The World Bonsai Friendship Federation (WBFF)

International Bonsai and Suiseki Confluence

March 21 to 23, 2025

Venue: Radisson Blu Resort & Spa, Karjat, Near Mumbai

- A two-and-a-half-day residential
- A world class Bonsai exhibition
- An elaborate exhibition of best in class Suiseki-Viewing Stones for the first time in India.
- International Bonsai & Suiseki Masters from across the globe.
- Lecture series on Suiseki by the international Authority
- A unique mentorship program for the Indian delegates
- Commercial stalls – Bonsai, material, suiseki and bonsai tools



Editors Letter

Dear Readers,

I hope you've enjoyed this month's issue of the Midway News! On the right, you'll see a lovely photo of the sunset in Nelspruit, as taken by my father-in-law.

If you have any questions, comments or would like to share your own tree photos, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

As always, I extend my gratitude to Arnold for his stunning photography. If you would like to showcase your trees in our newsletter, please send me your photos.

Best regards,

Pieter Bosch

